

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1825

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET SO FT OAU

SUBJ: OAU A/SEC GEN DISCUSSES TFAI

REF ADDIS ABABA 1726 (NOTAL

1. PETER ONU OAU A/SEC GEN (POLITICAL AFFAIRS) TOLD AMB
FEB 11 THAT HE NOW CONSIDERS TFAI MOST DANGEROUS FLASH
POINT ON AFRICAN CONTINENT, "MORE DANGEROUS EVEN THAN
ANGOLA."

2. ONU SAID THAT IN EFFORT ATTEMPT DEFUSE CRISIS BEFORE-
HAND RATHER THAN DEAL WITH RESULTS OF CONFLICT OVER TFAI
WHICH COULD ERUPT IN THE HORN, OAU PRESIDENT IDI AMIN
HAD TASKED OAU SECRETARIAT TO WORK UP LEGAL BRIEF ON
WHICH TO BASE PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT ETHIO-SOMALI GUARANTEE
OF DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE. THIS EFFORT NOW UNDERWAY.

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3. ACCORDING ONU, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED AT MAPUTO ALC MEETING THAT OAU SHOULD SEND A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO TFAI. SOMALIS HAD WANTED MISSION TO PROCEED PRIOR TO UPCOMING OAU CM. UNFORTUNATELY, COMPOSITION OF MISSION AND ITS FRAME OF REFERENCE HAD BEEN LEFT UNDECIDED BECAUSE OF EXTENSIVE POLITICAL MANEUVERING BY BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA WHICH SLOWED DOWN SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF TFAI ISSUE. ACCORDINGLY, ONU SAID, MISSION LIKELY WOULD PROCEED ONLY AFTER OAU CM. LATTER WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE FRAME OF REFERENCE AND COMPOSITION OF TEAM. MINISTERS PRESUMABLY WOULD SELECT REPS FROM TWO PRO-SOMALI AND TWO PRO-ETHIOPIAN STATES PLUS OAU SECRETARIAT PERSONNEL (ONU HIMSELF).

4. PROBED ON QUESTION OF EFFECTIVENESS ANY OAU GUARANTEE FOR AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI, ONU READILY ADMITTED THAT ORGANIZATION UNABLE PROVIDE DECISIVE PROTECTION. HE MUSED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE (LIKE ARAB LEAGUE IN KUWAIT) TO PLACE MILITARY CONTINGENT UNDER OAU AUSPICES IN DJIBOUTI TERRITORY PROVIDING ONLY THAT THOSE DIRECTLY CONCERNED PROVED WILLING. ONU DOUBTED THEY WOULD BE. HE AGREED ON PERSONAL BASIS THAT MOST EFFECTIVE GUARANTEE REMAINS THAT OF FRENCH BUT INDICATED THAT OAU COULD SCARCELY BE EXPECTED TO ARTICULATE THIS REALITY.

5. ONU THEN DISCUSSED VARIOUS PROBLEMS RELATING TO DJIBOUTI'S EVOLUTION TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE, GENERALLY ALONG LINES FAMILIAR TO THE DEPT; OBSTACLE COURSE WHICH ALI AREF BOURHAN WOULD HAVE TO RUN IN ORDER TO LEAD HIS COUNTRY INTO ITS NEW STATUS; AMBITIONS OF NEIGHBORS; AND NOTED PROBLEMS IN ETHIOPIA'S DECISION-MKAKING PROCESS WHICH MADE FONMIN KIFLE WODAJO'S JOB PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT, AS WELL AS OMAR ARTEH'S PROPENSITY FOR FREEWHEELING AND ANTAGONIZING HIS INTERLOCUTORS.

6. ONU AGREED THAT GDSR UNLIKELY ATTEMPT TO INVEST DJIBOUTI MILITARILY IN NEAR-TERM; FRENCH MILITARY PRESNECE TOO POWERFUL FOR THAT. BUT WOULD FRENCH REMAIN? ASKED WHETHER ARABS LIKELY SUPPORT SOMALI AMBITIONS IN DJIBOUTI, ONU EXPRESSED DOUBTS, ASSERTING THAT SOMALIA'S RELATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH MANY ARAB STATES VERY COOL. ONU ALSO DUBIOUS THAT SOMALIA WOULD BE ABLE TO MUSTER MUC OAU-AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR ITS AMBITIONS IN TFAI. HE CITED THE USUAL REASONS ADDING, HOWEVER, THAT RISING BLACK AFRICAN OPPOSITION TOWARDS THE ARAB WORLD IS A MAJOR FACTOR. (BURDEN OF ONU'S REMARKS ON THAT SUBJECT WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.)

7. COMMENT: IT WILL NOT ESCAPTE DEPT'S NOTICE THAT

"ETHIOPIAN PROPOSAL" FOR JOINT ETHIO-SOMALIA GUARANTEE OF
DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE MENTIONED TO US BY MOFA (CF PARA 5
REFTEL) AND ONU'S ACCOUNT OF PROPOSAL UPON WHICH OAU SECRE-
TARIAT NOW WORKING MAY BE ONE AND THE SAME.
HUMMEL

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